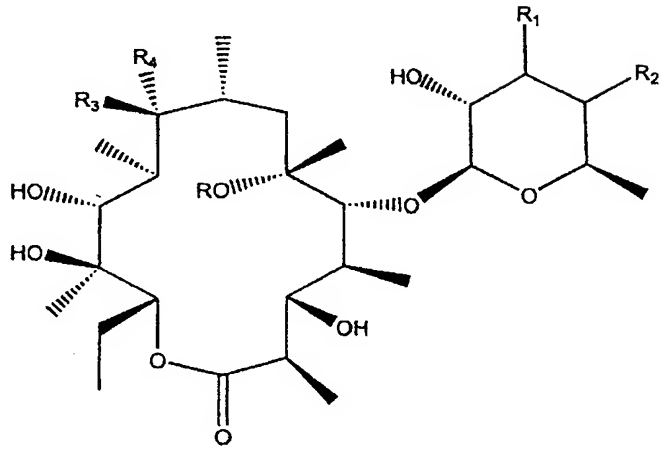
IN THE CLAIMS

**Please amend the claims as follows:**

1. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula

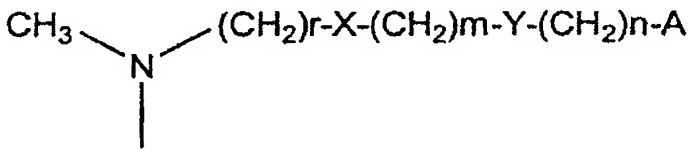


(I)

wherein

R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;

$R_1$ is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-dimethylamino-N-oxide group, an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group, an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylamino($C_1$-$C_2$)alkylamino]acetyl-N-methylamino group or a chain of formula



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wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring selected from pyrrole, thiophene, furan, imidazole, oxazole, thiazole, pyridine, pyrimidine, triazole and thiadiazole;

X is O or $NR_6$ and $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom;

Y is, when n is 0, a $C_6H_4$ group or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring selected from pyrrole, thiophene, furan, imidazole, oxazole, thiazole, pyridine, pyrimidine, triazole and thiadiazole; or, when n is 1, $NR_6$ and $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom;

r is an integer from 1 to 3;

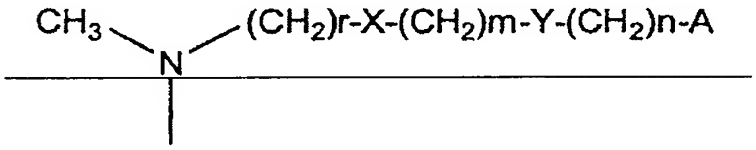
m is the integer 1 or 2;

n is the integer 0 or 1;

or $R_1$ forms a bond together with $R_2$

~~$R_1$ is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-di($C_1$-$C_3$)alkylamino group, an N,N-di($C_1$-$C_3$)alkylamino-N-oxide group, an N-($C_1$-$C_3$)alkyl-N-benzyl-amino group, an N-($C_1$-$C_4$)acyl-N-($C_1$-$C_3$)alkylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylamino($C_1$-$C_4$)alkylamino]acetyl-N-($C_1$-$C_3$)alkylamino group~~

~~or a chain of formula~~




~~wherein~~

~~A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring having from one to three hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur;~~

~~X is O, S, SO, $SO_2$ or $NR_6$, where $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched $C_1$-$C_3$ alkyl, a $C_1$-$C_3$ alkoxycarbonyl group or a benzyloxycarbonyl group;~~

~~Y is a $C_6H_4$ group, a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring having from one to three hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur or is O, S, SO, $SO_2$ or $NR_6$ where $R_6$ has the meanings given above;~~

~~r is an integer from 1 to 3;~~

~~m is an integer from 1 to 6;~~

~~n is an integer from 0 to 2;~~

~~or $R_1$ forms a bond together with $R_2$;~~

$R_2$ is a hydrogen atom or forms a bond together with $R_1$;

$R_3$ is a hydroxy group or forms a group =N-O-$R_5$ together with $R_4$, and $R_5$ is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched $C_1$-$C_5$ alkyl, a benzyl optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from nitro, hydroxy, carboxy, amino, linear or branched $C_1$-$C_5$ alkyl, $C_1$-$C_4$ alkoxycarbonyl groups, aminocarbonyl groups or cyano groups or a chain of formula

$$-(CH_2)r\text{-}X\text{-}(CH_2)m\text{-}Y\text{-}(CH_2)n\text{-}A$$

wherein

r, m, n, X, Y and A have the meanings given above;

$R_4$ is a hydrogen atom or forms a group =N-O-$R_5$ together with $R_3$, and $R_5$ has the meanings given above;

and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof~~,~~

~~provided, however, that~~

~~$R_1$ is not a dimethylamino group when $R_3$ is hydroxy, and both $R_2$ and $R_4$ are a hydrogen atom;~~

~~$R_1$ is not a dimethylamino group when in the substituent =N-O-$R_5$ in the 9 position, $R_5$ is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched $C_1$-$C_5$ alkyl, an unsubstituted benzyl group, or a chain -$(CH_2)$r-X-$(CH_2)$m-Y-$(CH_2)$n-A where r is 1, X is O, m is 2, Y is O, n is 1, and A is H;~~

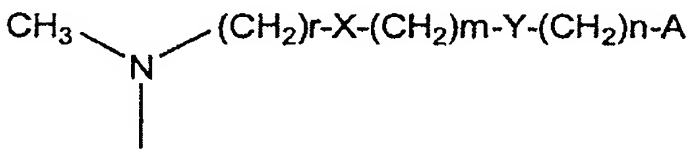
~~$R_1$ is not a methylethylamino group when in the substituent =N-O-$R_5$ in the 9 position, $R_5$ is a linear or branched $C_1$-$C_5$ alkyl, or an unsubstituted benzyl group~~.

2. (Original) A compound according to Claim 1, wherein the oxime group that may be present in position 9 is of E configuration.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A compound according to Claim 1, ~~Claim 4,~~ wherein $R_1$ is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-dimethylamino-N-oxide group, an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group, an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylaminoethylamino]acetyl-N-methylamino group or a chain of formula




wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a heteroaryl ring selected from thiophene, furan, thiazole, pyridine and triazole;

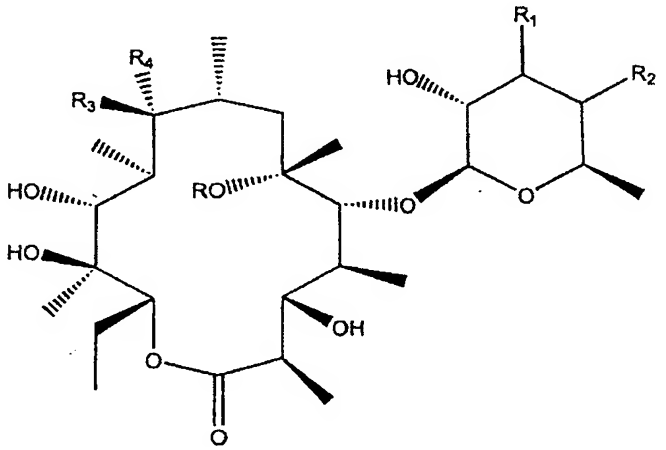
X is $NR_6$ and $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom;

Y is, when n is 0, a $C_6H_4$ group or a heteroaryl ring selected from thiophene, furan, thiazole, pyridine and triazole; or, when n is 1, $NR_6$ and $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom; or $R_1$ forms a bond together with $R_2$.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) ~~A compound according to Claim 7,~~ A compound of formula (I):

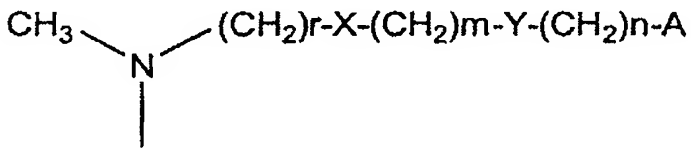



(I)

wherein

R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;

$R_1$ is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-dimethylamino-N-oxide group, an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group, an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylamino($C_1$-$C_2$)alkylamino]acetyl-N-methylamino group or a chain of formula




wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring selected from pyrrole, thiophene, furan, imidazole, oxazole, thiazole, pyridine, pyrimidine, triazole and thiadiazole;

X is O or $NR_6$ and $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom;

Y is, when n is 0, a $C_6H_4$ group or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring selected from pyrrole, thiophene, furan, imidazole, oxazole, thiazole, pyridine, pyrimidine, triazole and thiadiazole; or, when n is 1, $NR_6$ and $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom;

r is an integer from 1 to 3;

m is the integer 1 or 2;

n is the integer 0 or 1;

or $R_1$ forms a bond together with $R_2$;

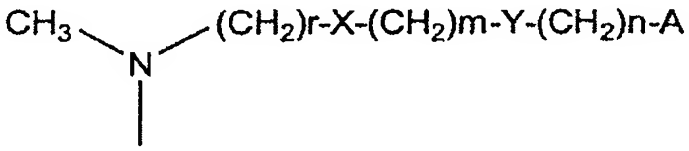
$R_2$ is a hydrogen atom or forms a bond together with $R_1$;

$R_3$ is a hydroxy group;

$R_4$ is a hydrogen atom;

and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

9. (Original) A compound according to Claim 8, wherein $R_1$ is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-dimethylamino-N-oxide group, an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group, an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylaminoethylamino]acetyl-N-methylamino group or a chain of formula




wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a heteroaryl ring selected from thiophene, furan, thiazole, pyridine and triazole;

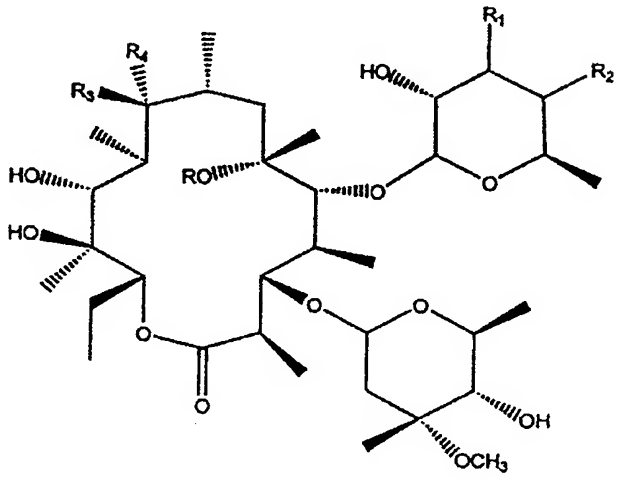
X is $NR_6$ and $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom;

Y is, when n is 0, a $C_6H_4$ group or a heteroaryl ring selected from thiophene, furan, thiazole, pyridine and triazole; or, when n is 1, $NR_6$ and $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom;

or $R_1$ forms a bond together with $R_2$.

10. - 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Original) A process for preparing a compound according to Claim 1, characterized in that the L-cladinose moiety in 3 position is removed from the erythromycin A compounds of formula



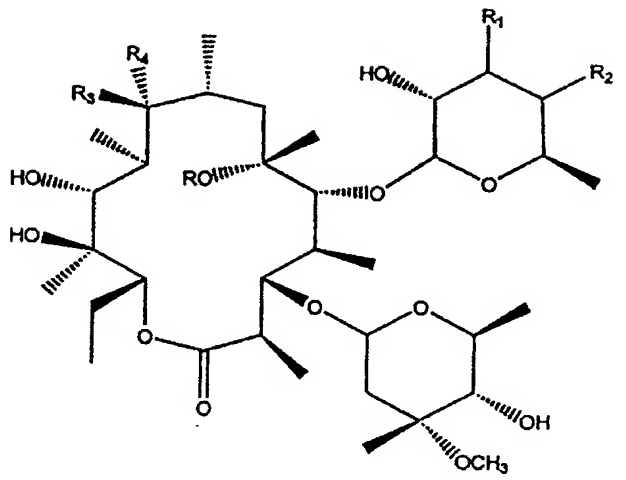
(II)

wherein R, $R_1$, $R_2$, $R_3$ and $R_4$ are defined as in Claim 1;
via a hydrolysis reaction.

18. (Original) Process according to Claim 17, wherein in formula II $R_3$ is a hydroxyl group and $R_4$ is a hydrogen atom.

19. (Original) Process according to Claim 17, wherein the removal of the cladinose is performed via an acid hydrolysis reaction catalyzed in the presence of a mineral acid and a protic organic solvent.

20. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula II:



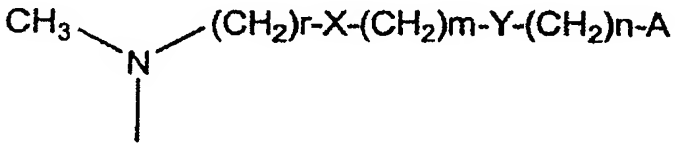
(II)

wherein

R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;

$R_1$ is a hydrogen atom, an N,N-di($C_1$-$C_3$)alkylamino group, an N,N-di($C_1$-$C_3$)alkylamino-N-oxide group, an N-($C_1$-$C_3$)alkyl-N-benzylamino group, an N-($C_1$-$C_4$)acyl-N-($C_1$-$C_3$)alkylamino group, an N-[N,N-dimethylamino($C_1$-$C_4$)alkylamino]acetyl-N-($C_1$-$C_3$)alkylamino group

or a chain of formula



wherein

A is a hydrogen atom, a phenyl or a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring having from one to three hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur;

X is O, S, SO, $SO_2$ or $NR_6$, where $R_6$ is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched $C_1$-$C_3$ alkyl, a $C_1$-$C_3$ alkoxycarbonyl group or a benzyloxycarbonyl group;

Y is a $C_6H_4$ group, a five- or six-membered heteroaryl ring having from one to three hetero atoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur or is O, S, SO, $SO_2$ or $NR_6$ where $R_6$ has the meanings given above;

r is an integer from 1 to 3;

m is an integer from 1 to 6;

n is an integer from 0 to 2;

or $R_1$ forms a bond together with $R_2$;

$R_2$ is a hydrogen atom or forms a bond together with $R_1$;

$R_3$ is a hydroxy group;

$R_4$ is a hydrogen atom;

and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof;

provided, however, that (i) $R_1$ is not an N,N-dimethyl amino group, and (ii) $R_1$ is not an N,N-dimethyl amino-N-oxide group when R is a hydrogen atom,

and provided that one of the following limitations is met:

R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ forms a bond together with $R_2$;

R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group;

R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group;

R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-[N,N-dimethylaminoethylamino]acetyl-N-methyl amino group;

R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-methyl-N-3-[(2-thiazolylmethyl)amino]propylamino group;

R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-2-[2-[(2-thiazolylmethyl)amino]ethylamino]ethyl-N-methylamino group; and

R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-2-[2-(benzylamino)ethylamino]ethyl-N-methylamino group.

21. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ forms a bond together with $R_2$.

22. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-benzyl-N-methylamino group.

23. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-acetyl-N-methylamino group.

24. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-[N,N-dimethylaminoethylamino]acetyl-N-methyl amino group.

25. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-methyl-N-3-[(2-thiazolylmethyl)amino]propylamino group.

26. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-2-[2-[(2-thiazolylmethyl)amino]ethylamino]ethyl-N-methylamino group.

27. (Original) A compound according to Claim 20, wherein R is a hydrogen atom and $R_1$ is an N-2-[2-(benzylamino)ethylamino]ethyl-N-methylamino group.

28. (Previously Presented) The compound de(N-methyl)-9-dihydroerythromycin A.

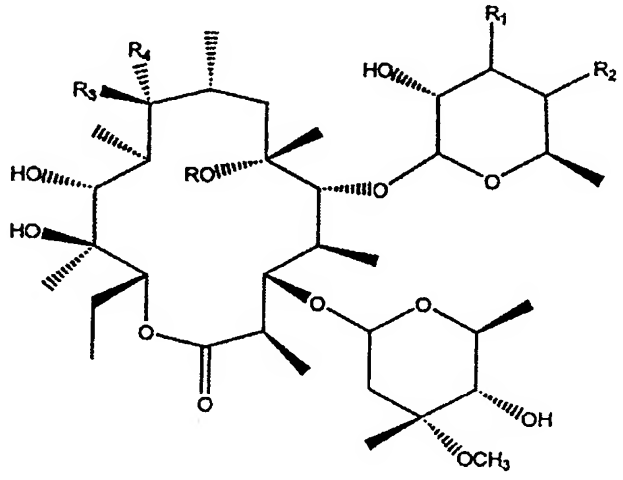
29. (Previously Presented) The compound de(N-methyl)-descladinosyl-9-dihydro-erythromycin A.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Cancelled)

33. (New) A process for preparing a compound according to Claim 8, wherein the L-cladinose moiety in 3 position is removed from the erythromycin A compounds of formula




(II)

wherein R, $R_1$, $R_2$, $R_3$ and $R_4$ are defined as in Claim 8;
via a hydrolysis reaction.

34. (Original) Process according to Claim 33, wherein the removal of the cladinose is performed via an acid hydrolysis reaction catalyzed in the presence of a mineral acid and a protic organic solvent.